

Great Milton Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Mr T Darch

Email: contact@clerkgreatmilton.co.uk

Website: www.great-milton.co.uk

Minutes of the Meeting of Great Milton Parish Council held virtually via video conference on Monday 18th May 2020 at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs S Harrod (Chairman), W Fox (Vice-Chairman), P Allen, G Bennet, C Deacon and M Horsley.

In Attendance: Tim Darch (Clerk), Cllr Caroline Newton (SODC) and no members of the public.

The meeting was conducted through a video conferencing facility. The new arrangements for the Parish Council are allowed under the following Regulation:

THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020

AGENDA

63/20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received in advance of the meeting from Cllr Peter Fewell.

64/20 Variation of order of business

Business was conducted in the order prescribed by the agenda.

65/20 Declarations of member's Interest (if any)

No declarations of interest were received from those councillors present.

66/20 Matters to Report

Ad hoc updates from the County Council and District Council are currently being received regularly in lieu of monthly reports. These are being cascaded to residents as a matter of course. The county councillor's Annual Report was received by the meeting.

Cllr Steve Harrod reported that OCC's household waste sites have reopened, staffed by some OCC employees from other departments including libraries and highways. 110 miles of roads have been surface-dressed while the roads have been quieter, and £2m has been allocated to the funding of PPE. Money has been requested from central government to supplement lost earnings from local authorities, but cuts are unfortunately inevitable in future to help to balance the books.

Cllr Caroline Newton stated that she had written to the Prime Minister voicing her concerns about the imminent planning application for 6,500 houses at the Harrington site. The site was a potential option in the SODC Local Plan but was not favoured due to lack of sustainability and poor access to the local road network. This is unlikely to be easily addressed, which counts against it as an attractive option. The applicants are trying to get Harrington included in the Local Plan in lieu of other site(s): Cllr Newton's opinion was that this will be an uphill battle and that officers and the Planning Inspector are likely to support the existing selection of sites: however even if not included, it still could be considered as a conventional planning application.

The application for a power generation facility at Lobb Farm has been rejected once again. Applications for two solar farms between Great Haseley and Tetsworth with over 130 hectares of panels are at an early stage. Concerns were raised over the size of these proposals, and that the additional power capacity available may have a positive bearing on the other large applications in the vicinity. There was also speculation about potential linkages between the solar farm and Harrington applications (though this has been denied), but it was agreed that green energy generation that could benefit local communities was a potential positive outcome.

The application for 500 houses at the Oxford Brookes site in Wheatley has been allowed on appeal, largely because the current Local Plan is out of date in planning terms. As a result it offers little or no defence, which Cllr Newton stated raises concerns about speculative applications until the new Local Plan is agreed and in place.

67/20 Correspondence and Public Discussion

No correspondence was received this month which is not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda, and there were no members of the public in attendance.

68/20 Planning Applications

A The following planning applications received from SODC were considered.

P20/S1261/SC (Land at Junction 7 of the M40: Harrington). A formal request for an EIA scoping opinion of South Oxfordshire District Council in accordance with Regulation 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for the proposed new settlement at Harrington.

This application is for the submission of a report to SODC by the applicant: the report would set out the scope of a proposed Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Statement, and is assumed that it would precede submission of a full planning application later in the year. The Chairman of the Parish Council has responded to SODC as follows:

'I am strongly opposed to this planning application as a whole, as are all residents in the vicinity, except the landowners concerned. This settlement will not be sustainable due to the lack of infrastructure serving the proposed site, lack of public transport, lack of access to railways which lie the other side of the motorway from the proposed site, and many others.

The proposed housing numbers are far in excess of those required in the current Local Plan and are likely to attract commuters from as far as London and Birmingham, rather than providing homes for local residents. The site is also far from the major employment sites in the area, namely in Oxford itself.

I trust any EIA will show up the shortcomings of this proposal'

Additionally the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council has been advised of the Parish Council's strong opposition to the proposed development, along with Mr Robert Jenrick, Housing Minister. The County Council continues to be less than enthusiastic about the site from a sustainability perspective given poor linkages to rail services and proximity to the M40, which may encourage car-based commuting to London and Birmingham.

P20/S0929/FUL (Oxen Field, Thame Road, Great Milton). Amendment as per additional information received 7 May 2020. This amendment deals only with planting and landscaping and raises no concerns from the Parish Council: it was AGREED to fully support the application.

B The following planning decisions received and outstanding planning matters were reviewed.

The Parish Council has been made aware of screening opinions being sought for solar photovoltaic farms adjacent to the proposed Harrington site (P20/S1346/SCR & P20/S1483/SCR). These applications are not for public consultation at this stage, but a preliminary discussion has taken place between the applicant and the Chairman of the Parish Council. A full planning application will eventually be submitted.

P19/S2685/FUL (Lobb Farm, Access Road To Lobb Farm Tetsworth South OX9 7BE). Gas Fired Electricity Generating Facility with the ability to generate up to 49.99 MW of electricity. (As clarified by additional information submitted 10 September 2019, 12 September 2019 and 22 October 2019, 30 October 2019, 19 November 2019, 21 November 2019 and 12 February 2020, and amended by ownership certificate received 5 February 2020). Planning permission is REFUSED for the development described above.

69/20 Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held virtually on Monday 20th April 2020 were approved as a true and accurate record of proceedings, and were physically signed during the meeting.

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70/20 Financial Resolutions

- A The following cheques for payment were agreed and authorised, and were physically signed along with associated invoices subsequent to this meeting:
Tim Darch. Salary, Tax and Expenses. £434.90
Jonathan Dudley. Bulletin production May. £88.60
Came and Company (Parish Council insurance premium). £338.40
Green and Growing. Village mowing. £372
Great Milton Against Coronavirus volunteer effort (Laura Putt). Grant received from SODC towards food parcels as per minute 54/20. £500.
- B Internal Audit Report
The internal audit report was received from Matthew Hale (Internal Auditor), who had also signed and returned the Internal Auditor's section of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The internal audit report raised no concerns or issues for action.
- C Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement) and Section 2 (Annual Accounting Statements) of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ending 31st March 2020 were reviewed and agreed, then signed in sequence by the Chairman and the Clerk/RFO as required in advance of publication and the Exercise of Public Rights period (which is currently scheduled for 15 June to 24 July 2020).
- D The intention to submit an application for the refund of £1140.72 VAT incurred between April 1 2019 and March 31 2020 was agreed and noted.
- E The receipt of £500 from Cllr Caroline Newton's COVID-19 councillor fund was noted. Thanks were extended to Cllr Newton and SODC for this valuable contribution, which will be directed to the village's volunteer response and specifically to Laura Putt to help fund continued provision of her care packages for vulnerable residents.
- F The Clerk/RFO's salary and allowances were reviewed. After discussion it was agreed to increase the Clerk's salary to SCP12 (£11.22 per hour, from £10.37 per hour) and to increase the home working allowance from £2 per week to £6 per week in line with HMRC guidance.
- G The monthly bank reconciliation, accounts and bank statements were all received and signed. The reconciled bank balance as at 7 May was £38,497.28.

71/20 Parish Clerk and Councillors' update of matters in hand

The large and precarious loose branch has been removed from a tree in front of the Priory. Thanks to neighbours and to the new residents for their help in resolving this issue.

72/20 COVID-19: update on village response/impacts

A financial contribution from the Parish Council towards the village's COVID-19 volunteer effort was discussed. After discussions it was agreed to make a further donation of £500 from Parish Council funds to the local volunteer effort at the June meeting, with a further review of the situation in July.

The meeting concluded at 8.15pm.

The next meeting of Great Milton Parish Council is currently scheduled to be held virtually on Monday June 15th starting at 7.30pm.

SIGNED
